

REMARKS

Claims 19, 21-22, 24, 27-29, 31-33, 36, and 38 will be pending upon entry of the present amendment. Claims 19 and 27-28 are being amended. Claims 25, 30, and 37 are being cancelled.

Claims 19, 21, 24, and 27 were rejected under 35 U.S.C. § 103 as being unpatentable over U.S. Patent No. 5,948,991 to Nomura et al. ("Nomura") in view of U.S. Patent No. 4,894,707 to Yamawaki et al. ("Yamawaki").

Nomura and Yamawaki do not teach or suggest the invention recited in claim 19, as amended. In particular, claim 19 recites a packaged electronic device that includes an electronic circuit with a pressure sensor, and ring-shaped, elastic projection portion that projects from a surface of the device into a window to enable the pressure sensor to be activated through the projection portion when the device is in use. Nomura and Yamawaki do not teach or suggest such a ring-shaped projecting portion for a pressure sensor circuit.

There is no motivation in the prior art for combining Nomura and Yamawaki to create the claimed invention. Nomura shows a pressure-sensitive chip 11 with a gel-like protective member 15 covering the entire top of the chip 15. Yamawaki shows an image sensor 1, a glass window 2, 12, and an enclosed wall 3 that extends between the image sensor and the glass window. The reason that the wall 3 is ring-shaped is obvious: to allow the image sensor an unobstructed view through the space that is enclosed by the wall 3. Such an unobstructed view is irrelevant for a pressure sensor like the chip 11 of Nomura. Thus, Yamawaki does not provide any motivation for changing the protective member 15 of Nomura to a ring shape like the wall 3 of Yamawaki.

The applicants respectfully disagree with the motivation given by the Examiner for combining Yamawaki with Nomura. The Examiner states that it would have been obvious to incorporate the Yamawaki teaching into the device of Nomura because it prevents contact of the mold to the electronic device. This is incorrect for at least two reasons. First, the ring-shaped wall 3 of Yamawaki does not prevent contact of an electronic device with a mold any better than the solid protective layer 15 of Nomura, so there is no need to switch to the ring-shaped wall 3. In fact, the solid protective layer 15 of Nomura would provide better contact prevention than the

ring-shaped wall 3 of Yamawaki. Second, Nomura has no need to prevent contact between the pressure sensitive element unit 10 and a mold, because the element unit 10 is never placed inside of a mold. Instead, Nomura first makes a molded resin block 3 with an opening 3a, and after the resin block 3 is removed from the mold, attaches the pressure sensitive element unit 10 and sensor chip 11 in the opening 3a of the block 3 (see columns 4 and 8 and Figure 10).

For the foregoing reasons, claim 19 is nonobvious in view of Nomura and Yamawaki. Claims 21 and 24 depend on claim 19, and thus, are also nonobvious.

Although the language of claim 27 differs from that of claim 19, the allowability of claim 27 will be apparent in view of the above discussion.

Claims 22, 29, 31-33, 36, and 38 were rejected under 35 U.S.C. § 103 as being unpatentable over Yamawaki in view of Nomura.

Yamawaki and Nomura do not teach or suggest the invention recited in claim 22. Claim 22 recites that the device includes a dyke or barrier that surrounds an elastic projection portion and is formed on a surface of an electronic circuit. The Examiner admits that Yamawaki does not teach such a dyke or barrier. The Examiner does not assert that Nomura teaches such a dyke or barrier¹, but asserts that the combined device of Yamawaki and Nomura includes such a dyke or barrier. The applicants respectfully submit that such an assertion does not make logical sense. If neither reference teaches a dyke or barrier, then the combination of the two references cannot teach a dyke or barrier.

Even if there were a motivation for combining Yamawaki and Nomura, the resulting device would not satisfy the language of claim 22 for at least two reasons. First, the combination of Yamawaki and Nomura would not include a dyke or barrier that surrounds and elastic projection portion. Instead, the protective member 132 of Nomura extends across the entire top surface of the device 130 while the elastic wall 3 of Yamawaki is positioned away from the edges of the device 1, so the elastic wall 3 would not surround the protective member 132, and thus, could not satisfy the dyke language of claim 22.

¹ The applicants note that the Examiner already admitted that Nomura does not teach such a dyke or barrier (page 6 of the Office Action dated November 17, 2003).

Second, the prior art does not provide any suggestion to use both the elastic wall 3 of Yamawaki and the protective member 132 of Nomura rather than replacing the elastic wall 3 with the protective member 132 or replacing the protective member 132 with the elastic wall 3. The only reasons mentioned by Yamawaki for the elastic wall 3, to protect the device 1 during molding and to support the glass layer 2, are not applicable to any device that incorporates the protective member 132 of Nomura, and thus, there is no reason in the prior art to include both the elastic wall 3 and the protective member 132. Only an improper hindsight reconstruction based on the applicants' disclosure provides such a suggestion.

For the foregoing reasons, claim 22 is nonobvious in view of the cited prior art.

Although the language of claims 29, 31-33, 36, and 38 differs from that of claim 22, the allowability of claims 29, 31-33, 36, and 38 will be apparent in view of the above discussion.

The applicant submits that all pending claims are allowable in view of the foregoing remarks. If there are any remaining issues to be resolved the applicant respectfully requests the Examiner to contact the applicant's attorney, Robert Iannucci, for a telephone interview.

The Commissioner is authorized to charge any additional fees due by way of this Amendment, or credit any overpayment, to our Deposit Account No. 19-1090.

All of the claims remaining in the application are now clearly allowable. Favorable consideration and a Notice of Allowance are earnestly solicited.

Respectfully submitted,

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